out. The traveler was amazed at my outburst and Balak motioned me to be silent. But how could I help saying what I did? Naomi an embittered woman indeed! She drew my only daughter after herself to console her in her old age, leaving me alone, a dry old woman without child or grandchild.

"And Ruth is again married," the traveler told us, "to a man named Boaz and she has a little son."

"What is the name of this Moabite woman's little son?" I asked.

"Does it matter?" the man answered in puzzlement. "Enough that it is a strange and wondrous story and ended so marvelously well for all concerned." But seeing my distressed eagerness he did mention that the boy was named Obed.

Does it matter! Could anything matter more? And now I knew I was a grandmother, and that my little grandson, Ruth's son, was named Obed. But daughter and grandson were alike so unattainable. The story of Ruth had no place in it for Ruth's mother, not one word of the abandoned mother.

"More they say in Bethlehem," the traveler continued. "A strange thing they tell, that a great king and redeemer of mankind, one they call Messiah, will some day be born from the offspring of this Moabite woman and her husband. It is a legend in his tribe, and they all believe it in Bethlehem."

Perhaps the traveler told other things, I do not know, for at this I left the house and cried. What matters to me this strange story of a Messiah to come out of Judah! It is my Ruth I need, it is her little Obed that I want to take to my bosom, to be consoled and refreshed by her goodness and by the tenderness of his childish face. Let them have their Messiah from their own kin, if only mine were returned to me.

The story of the traveler troubles me very much. A year ago my Balak died and I was left alone. Then I decided that, happen what may, I would again see Ruth and also her little son. I would go to Judah. It is really not very far, down the hills to the Jordan, and then up into the hills—difficult for an old woman, but not impossible. But to this day I haven't begun my journey, and with every passing day it becomes more difficult and less likely. Why don't I start out? I don't know the true answer myself. Somehow I am afraid. No, neither the hardships of the trip nor its dangers stop me. I know that almost any day I could join a camel caravan going west, and in their kindness the people of the caravan might even have pity on my age and let me ride one of their beasts. I am afraid of other things. I fear Naomi's bitter pride, which in her triumph must have grown still greater. Even more I am afraid of what my Ruth, now no longer mine, might think. She was always a good daughter, and I am sure she would receive me kindly. But might she not look at me as at a stranger, and in her heart think: "Who is this Moabite woman and what does she want of me, now that I am a mother in Judah and from my womb has come he who will be the progenitor of the Messiah?" This I fear, to be doubly denied, and probably this is why I never started on my journey, and never will.

But when on clear mornings I look at the hills of Judah, I can almost see my lost Ruth walking through the streets of Bethlehem, proudly carrying in her arms her little son Obed, my little grandson Obed. It is then I feel like crying to her over the hills: "Ruth! Return to me, Ruth!"

We offer below two reports on the reaction of Jews in the troubled South. HARRY L. GOLDEN, editor of the *Carolina Israelite* and a leading analyst of the affairs of Southern Jews, discusses their situation today, caught between the moral demands exerted on them by the fight for Negroes' rights and the pressures of their white Gentile neighbors. ALBERT VORSPAN, Executive Secretary of the Commission on Social Action of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and co-author of *Justice and Judaism*, presents some composite portraits of Southern Jews under strain.

Unease In Dixie

I. Caught in the Middle

By HARRY L. GOLDEN

A. J. PICKETT in his *History of Alabama*, (Charleston, S. C. 1851), may have been piqued when he found that among Alabama's pioneers had been "one Abram Mordecai, a Jew." It seems that in 1785 "a group of traders established a trading-house two miles west of Line Creek," which is a few miles from the site of the present capital city of Montgomery. "All the traders," wrote Mr. Pickett, "had Indian wives, but Mordecai's was considerably darkened by the blood of Ham."

Thus the American Jewish Tercentenary celebration of 1955 was of special interest to the Jewish community of Alabama. In addition to the display of Jewish contributions to American art, science, military service and communal responsibility, it also had the pioneer Mordecai, even if his squaw did have more Negro blood in her than the other Indians.

Less than a year after the celebration the leading Jews of Alabama (and the rest of the deep South) were terribly worried over the immediate future. They were concerned not only about the continued prosperity of their enterprise but for their actual physical well-being. And all of this had nothing to do with any national or sectional disaster or tragedy, or with the activities of the Jewish community itself or even with the delinquency of one of its number. Instead, the fear grew out of a continued resistance, by stratagems of attrition, by their Gentile neighbors against the decision of the United States Supreme Court which declared unconstitutional the segregation between the white and Negro races in the public schools.

Thus in the deep South of 1956, the white man fears the Negro; the Jew fears the white man; and the Negro, the focal point of this entire embroglio, fears no one. And within the Jewish community it is significant that the fear involves those who have always considered themselves "most" assimilated; the "most" successful and the "most" integrated; and most scared of all is the fellow who had a Confederate grandfather.

It is necessary to make one point clear at the outset. The Jew in the South does not consider this problem on the simple basis of being either "for" or "against" the elimination of racial segregation. In fact the Jew in the South rarely thinks in terms of the Negro at all as he wrestles with this problem in his communal meetings or in the communications to his national fraternities and religious organiza-

tions. Instead, he sees the problem as merely one of certain fixed "jeopardies," any one of which is serious enough to threaten his security. Thus if the textile mills were to shut down, for instance, it would mean economic disaster for the entire South, but to the Jew it would mean much more. It would involve his constant fear that those who may deem themselves responsible for such a tragedy would automatically seek to shift the responsibility to the Jew; charge him with their guilt and the punishment otherwise due them.

It is also significant that in several of the regional conferences of national Jewish organizations, Southern Jews have referred time and again to the anti-Semitic explosion during the famous Leo Frank case. The Jews of the South understand, as if by instinct, that the anger arising out of the Supreme Court order to desegregate the public schools is of one piece with the frustration of the thousands of farmers and sharecroppers in the Georgia of 1913 when local banks could no longer finance the cotton crop. It was terrible economic distress that made it possible for a Tom Watson to unloose the most serious anti-Semitic campaign in the history of the South, culminating in the lynching of Leo Frank.

THUS in the present controversy the Jew feels that his own dilemma is the result of decisions and of attitudes in which he has had no part, and which were determined by neither his wishes nor his conduct. In fact his personal convictions are not involved at all. Here and there a Jew with a particular longing for "*yichus*" may say, "In our home the darkies always use the back door." But these are isolated cases. In the entire South there is no one less convincing than a Jewish "white supremacist" (as tragi-comical a figure as the Negro anti-Semite). Of all the ethnic groups in America only the Negroes and the Jews are denied the luxury of two of the "constants" of our society, "white supremacy" and anti-Semitism. The Jew of course knows this. And what is even more to the point he knows that his opposite number among the white Gentiles knows it too. But it is precisely for this reason that the Gentile in the deep South has been pressuring the Jew to join in, or contribute to, his pro-segregation organizations. The white Gentile interested in this pro-segregation resistance values Jewish support highly because he considers it a "defection" from the ranks of the "enemy." He places the Jewish pro-segregationist in the same category as the occasional Negro "leader" who signs a paper stating "We Negroes will never be happy in white schools."

The Jew is only vaguely conscious of the more serious implications involved in his acquiescence to the pro-segregation movement. And for this the leadership of some of his national religious and social-action organizations may have to bear the responsibility for a long time to come. Because for the Jew in the South such acquiescence means the confirmation of the frightening concept that his freedom and safety, even in America, have a frontier—a frontier involving the necessity to conform to the prejudices of the society in which he lives. It should also be remembered that the Jew thinks of this "required" conformity in terms of actual survival—"What will happen to us here?"—despite the fact that he has never been excluded from the open society of the Gentile world. At this level there is considerable ambivalence in the Jew's feeling toward the Negro. There is a sense of guilt over the fact the the black man, indigenous to the Southern soil for a dozen generations, and a "minority" like him, has been denied his free access to the open society. But there is envy too. The Jew envies the fact that the Negro, even though denied this access, never thinks of himself in terms of actual sur-

vival. All the Negro wants is to ride the buses, go to better schools and get better jobs. No one has yet heard him say "What will happen to us here?"

THE racial question has made the Jew conscious of a basic reality in his relation to the open society, that is, the Gentile desire for Jewish separateness ("All the Goldstein boys in our town married *American* girls"). In recent months the professional hate-mongers have changed their anti-Semitic literature from "The Zionist-Bolshevik Conspiracy" to "The Jewish Conspiracy to Mongrelize the White Race." In defending the Jews against this nonsense, a Montgomery (Ala.) editor wrote: "They contribute to all *our* charities; *they* head all *our* civic drives; *they* help the poor and sick. . . ." The italics are mine, although it was hardly necessary to call attention to them even in a city that had a Mordecai among its founders. Only in the small agricultural towns is this status of separateness accepted by the one or two Jewish families, since the relationship at this level is so clearly defined there is no opportunity for ambiguity at all. The Gentile neighbors always think of the one or two Jews in town in terms of a people, and it is from this that the few Jews draw their strength even though they are cut off from congregation and organized community. It is in this context that the most kindly disposed pro-segregationist cannot deliver on his promise that "it will help the Jewish people all around if they join in the fight for the Southern way of life." Indeed, if all the Jews in the South joined the Citizens Councils or the Patriots Incorporated, the anti-Semitic pamphleteers would not lose a single "issue." The Jews are smart, they've all joined the Klan in order to make it easier to mongrelize the white race, the argument would then run. And, of course, this is far from fantasy. In Alabama one of the best known Jewish communal leaders who has always fought against any "Jewish" expression on the matter of desegregation, was photographed at a meeting of a local charity organization seated beside a Negro clergyman who also attended the meeting. The photo was blown up and used by the hate-monger Asa Carter as evidence of the Jewish interest in mongrelization. In Charlotte, North Carolina, one of the best-known communal leaders had been particularly active over the years in his attempts, first, to prevent a Jewish organization from entering a "friend-of-the-court" petition in the segregation cases, and later, to prevent the national Jewish organizations from issuing a public expression for the desegregation of the public schools. Ironically this is the man who was specifically singled out by the "Patriots" and the Ku Klux Klan elements as the "head of the mongrelizers of the white race."

The "quality" of the pro-segregation forces is another factor in the dilemma of the Jew of the South. While the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920's was predominantly a "wool-hat," rural movement, the anti-integration forces of 1956 include a surprisingly large percentage of urban middle-class Southerners. This phenomenon has come as a severe blow to the Negro. He had every reason to believe that the Southern manufacturer, lawyer, doctor, agent, and white-collar worker would be his allies in the drive to implement the decision of the Supreme Court to eliminate racial discrimination in the public schools. For years it had been this segment of the white society which supported every liberal movement in the cultural, educational and economic betterment of the Negro. When a Negro ran for public office, his only white support would usually come from the best residential sections of the urban community. Yet at this crucial moment these same people threw their support to the pro-segregationists.

This is no great mystery if we consider the entire process of the emergence of

the social classes after the overthrow of agriculture as the dominant way of life of the South. The Negro was not the only one segregated. In fact, the Negro, using the back door, had far more access to the white Southern middle-class than did the Anglo-Saxon mill-worker, service-station operator, or unskilled laborer. The stratification of the social classes was effected at every level of the Southerner's culture and religion. First he belonged to a "downtown" church, and when his economic status improved, he joined with his social equals and organized a new church in his own exclusive residential district. The mill-workers went to separate schools, separate churches, and used separate entertainment facilities. At an early age the "uptown" children were told *not* to play with the children "on the hill," (cotton mill area). The process of dehumanization had gone so far that when an "uptown" teen-ager was seen with a girl "from the mill," his parents' only concern was expressed in terms of "sowing his wild oats" or risking venereal disease; it was unthinkable that anything serious could possibly develop.

Thus for a half-century this upper-class white Southerner had been running away from his own people, Anglo-Saxons of six and seven American generations, and now he was being asked to eliminate the segregation of an outsider, the black man, involving for him, the urban, middle-class Southerner, a sense of guilt which will be very difficult to overcome. And these are precisely the people from whom the Jewish storekeeper class of the South has sought acceptance for so long.

Thus the Jew now fears his loss of identity with the "best" people as much as he fears the more remote possibility of economic reprisal.

What further makes the position of the Jew uncomfortable is that the Negro takes it for granted that he possesses the sympathy of the Jews. Yet the Negro has not made the slightest move toward enlisting the active support of the Southern Jew in his fight for desegregation. His leadership has stated in no uncertain terms that it would hurt Negroes if another minority were to be in the forefront of their struggle. Thus the Jew is "solicited" only by the pro-segregationists, which adds to his deep sense of guilt toward the Negro. This is concerned primarily with a belief which the Jew in the South has expressed hundreds of times that the Negro serves as his "shock-absorber," his *kaporeh* (sacrificial substitute), and that if the Southerners were to lose their Negro *kaporeh* they would look around for the all-time favorite. Furthermore it was not until quite recently that the Jew fully understood the "pressure" from the Negro that is as great as the "pressure" from the white supremacist. He almost overlooked the fact that a very large portion of his business comes from Negro customers. This is particularly true of the credit-jewelry stores, the pawn shops and small loan companies, and the retail (mostly dry-goods) establishments clustered near "the underpass" of a thousand Southern cities and towns.

THE JEW is also well aware of the fact that the Negro, with all his troubles, does not suffer from the terrible ambivalence that the Jew knows in his day-to-day relations with the general community. With a few notable exceptions the Jew has shied away from participation in public or political affairs because the Gentile insists upon this Jewish separateness—"We ought to have a Jew on the City Council." In his drive for full acceptance in the American middle class the Jew steadfastly refuses to participate on these terms. He therefore retires to his Temple and Country Club where he piles one "Jewish" activity upon another and secures for himself the little honors and the self-expression which he feels are being denied to him in the open society. On another occasion I have already told the

story of the Jewish manufacturer who fought long and hard to get on the board of directors of his local Community Chest. He came away from his first meeting with a heavy heart: "They gave me all the Jewish cards."

The Negro, on the other hand, seeks public participation on precisely the terms which the Jew declines: "They should have *A Negro* on the City Council"; "*We* ought to be represented on the Park Commission"; and "What has the Democratic Party of the South ever done for *us?*" Again, with few exceptions, both the Negro and the Jew feel themselves alienated from the local community. One, because he refuses to participate "*as a Jew*," and the other, because he insists upon participation "*as a Negro.*" The white Protestant of the South loves "the Jewish people," but is highly suspicious of the individual Jew. His emotions are in reverse with respect to the Negro. He loves the individual Negro, but hates the "people."

This alienation from the local community has had important sociological consequences for Jew and Negro. The Negro whose ancestors may have lived in a community for over two hundred years will speak only of "The Negroes of the South," or just "The Negroes." He will rarely mention "The Negroes of Kenilworth, South Carolina." He thinks of himself in terms of an entire racial and cultural civilization. The Jew also thinks of himself as apart from the local community. The name of the community on the masthead of his morning newspaper is purely coincidental. It could read "Tallahassee, Florida" or "Greenville, South Carolina" and arouse the same lack of emotion. When he is on a buying trip in New York and meets with an old friend he will reply: "Yes, I have a store in *the South.*" Or he may actually say, "I have a store in Virginia." Neither the Negro nor the Jew is likely to think in the specific terms of the local Chamber of Commerce slogan "Watch Kenilworth Grow."

As part of his unwillingness to accept the Gentile's terms of Jewish separateness, the Jew of the South has fought hard against being "committed" by another Jew, or by a national Jewish organization. He prides himself on being well-integrated in the Gentile society of his community, yet he will argue for hours against the publication of a resolution passed by some organization far away in New York. And he does not see any inconsistency in this. He raises his hands in horror at the mere mention of a *kehilla*, or "organic" community, yet he spends many valuable hours worrying about some Jewish newcomer to the community who is addicted to writing letters to the editor. "We have someone else to worry about now," he will say. In fact, he makes determined efforts to control such "Jewish" expressions when it is within his power to do so. This is really at the bottom of the continued activity of the few small anti-Zionist groups in Richmond, Atlanta, Memphis, Birmingham and Houston. They create the illusion that they are concerned with the sovereignty of Israel and its effect upon American foreign policy, but basically their real worry is that somewhere in the country some Zionist or Zionist group may issue a statement that will "commit" them in the eyes of the Gentile community.

WHAT about the Southern white Protestant who does not join White Citizens Councils and Ku Klux groups? We must not forget that it was the Southerner himself who, through the slow and often cruel decades, consciously or unconsciously laid the foundations for the universality of ideas embodied in the Supreme Court's decision to eliminate racial segregation. Today a very large body of these Southerners are convinced that enforced segregation of the races can no longer be justified on any basis, but the actual problem of integrating the races in

the public schools is unprecedented for the two generations that have lived with the laws of Jim Crow.

Because of racial segregation, and because the South has never had any substantial numbers of Mediterranean, Slav or other peoples of Eastern European origin, the Southerner constituted himself into the largest single homogeneous group of Anglo-Saxons in the Western Hemisphere. Wherever he looked he saw a member of the clan, a reflection of himself, his origins, culture, religions and attitudes. He therefore quite naturally permitted his private life to overlap into his public institutions. His children could run up and down the school corridors and discuss their personal and family affairs without the slightest inhibition. Thus when the Southerner talks of his sister's marriage he thinks in terms of the school-house, the church basement and the neighborhood prayer-circle or political rally. It is precisely at one of these levels within his society that his sister does indeed get married. Thus from school-house to jury box the South has been one big private "clubhouse." And now he is faced with the necessity of disassociating his private life from his public institutions, and it is a problem that not only calls for wisdom, but for the good will and the understanding that this must be done.

The situation is intensified by the Southerner's very deep sense of guilt which affects his daily life. He has been willing to send the Negro children to elementary school, junior high school, provide dental care, lunches, transportation and even college training. And after all that trouble and cost, on the day the Negro receives his college diploma he also buys a railroad ticket to Camden, New Jersey, or Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "Ah," says the white supremacist, "we're getting rid of our Nigras," but it is not that simple, because this college-trained boy, whom the Southerner denies the right to use the skills which he himself has taught him, leaves behind his unskilled father and his illiterate brother. So the Southerner's welfare and hospital costs keep abreast of his almost insurmountable cost of a double education system. He consoles himself now and again with the statement that the Negro is not able to cope with the skills or the requirements of the upgrading jobs which he denies him, but he also knows that the Negroes in the South lose over one-half their high school graduates each year. Out of 107 graduates of a major Negro college in North Carolina in 1954, 44 were no longer in the state two years later; and of the others, 10 were working as waiters and janitors, while the rest were in government service, in the teaching profession and in the clergy. But the Southerner's sense of guilt goes even deeper than the attempt to maintain racial segregation. He knows that in the South 15 Negroes out of every 1,000 die of tuberculosis, as against a white death rate of 4 in 1,000; and this at the height of the greatest prosperity we have ever known. Almost without exception, the condition of the communities in which the Negroes live favors the spread of tuberculosis and venereal disease. The Southerner knows too that the second biggest killer in the South is pregnancy, Negro pregnancy. In 1953, 189 Negro mothers out of each 100,000 died in child-birth as against 37 deaths per 100,000 white mothers.

The Southerner is fully aware of the fact that education takes place in many ways and at many levels, and that there is great danger at the moment that his children may be educated in an atmosphere of evasion. If he continues to maneuver and manipulate in order to circumvent the duly constituted agency of the law, how will he explain this action to his children? The tragedy of the moment is not that the end of racial segregation is being delayed. The Supreme Court will prevail. The greater tragedy by far is that large groups of Southerners are being de-

luded; they are being served huge doses of self-delusion and false hopes. Politicians and wishful thinkers have been telling the people that the decree of the Supreme Court can be defeated. But the Supreme Court will not be defeated.

Lastly the Southerner's sense of guilt is heightened by the realization that for the first time he finds himself arrayed against his religious leaders and organizations. The Supreme Court's ruling was followed by immediate declarations by the great religious denominations in the South overwhelmingly supporting the decision as an expression of their own commitments to the brotherhood of all people. It is still too early to say that the church must surrender the field to the white supremacists. There can be little doubt of the effectiveness of the Southern religious leader when he asserts himself. In Montgomery, Alabama, which has recently been the scene of such extremism and fear, the evangelist Rev. Billy Graham conducted an interracial luncheon meeting over two years ago, and at the time not a single white supremacist raised his voice in protest. When this evangelist was asked to dedicate a new coliseum in Charlotte, North Carolina, a few months ago, he agreed on one condition—there must be no segregation of the races. The event was carried off without a single incident. It is true that the main body of Southern Protestantism has not yet followed up on its initial commitment, but it is equally true that the real contending forces in the South today are the Protestant churches and the forces of hatred and bigotry. So far the latter are making the most noise; now it is time, and past time, for the Protestant churches to be heard and seen.

II. A Visitor's Account

By ALBERT VORSPAN

JOE ROTHBERG is a middle-aged businessman in a large Alabama city. Although born in the North, he has lived in the South since boyhood. He and his family have a large comfortable home in an outlying section of town and he loves the gracious Southern way of life. For at least two decades, Joe has been prominent in the business and civic life of the community. Until recently he was never conscious of any barrier in the full acceptance of himself and fellow Jews by the Christian community. But now he is worried. The angry backwash of the Till case, the Lucy incident, and the Montgomery bus boycott have created a new situation. Now, for the first time, he feels his full acceptance by the community is qualified.

Joe has always regarded himself as a "progressive" in race relations, and he has in the past worked quietly for better Negro housing, schools, recreational facilities. He was among those who were willing to have a Negro baseball player on the city professional ball team. While Joe makes it a point not to discuss such matters except with close personal friends, he recognizes segregation by race as a "bad thing." But Joe does not believe the Southern Negro is ready for integration.

Like most of his Jewish friends, Joe was deeply upset by the Till murder, but he feels that the Till boy was "looking for trouble" and that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People by its "agitating" prevented justice from being done. He is violently opposed to the Montgomery bus boycott which he believes is setting back race relations in Alabama at least a generation. As for the Lucy case, Joe puts it this way: "I say, yes, a qualified Negro has a right to get into the University of Alabama—and that will come. But the